



# East Central Idaho News

BONNEVILLE, BUTTE, CLARK, CUSTER, FREMONT, JEFFERSON, LEMHI, MADISON & TETON COUNTIES

## ECONOMIC TRENDS

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased one-tenth of a percentage point from March and decreased seven-tenths of a percentage point from April 2006 to 2.4 percent in the Idaho Falls Metropolitan Statistical Area as shown in East Central Idaho Table 1. The metropolitan unemployment rate has remained at or below 2.5 percent since December. Continued good weather has allowed a large number of construction projects to start up and get workers back into jobs earlier than normal. Continued population growth in the Idaho Falls area and surrounding counties, using Idaho Falls as their retail and medical hub, fuels growth in virtually every commercial sector, encouraging new businesses and increasing demand for workers.

## 2007 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

The 2006-2007 school year is officially over, and thousands of young people are ready to enter the work force, either to start careers or in preparation for higher education. East central Idaho's nine counties have close to 2,500 high school graduates this spring — ready for a new phase in life with a diploma in hand. Metropolitan Idaho Falls alone had over 1,600 graduates. Some will leave the area for work or higher education opportunities. Others will leave for personal reasons. But many will stay to find a good employer. Most employers in east central Idaho require a high school diploma or GED to be hired. While the labor market is very tight and employers are not getting the same number of applicants they once did, they might consider looking into a hidden labor force — young people without the paper qualifications for employment. Helping young people finish high school can provide a

East Central Idaho Table 1: Idaho Falls MSA Labor Force & Employment  
Bonneville and Jefferson counties

	Apr 2007*	Mar 2007	Apr 2006	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
<b>INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE</b>					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	59,440	58,820	57,690	1.1	3.0
Unemployment	1,410	1,370	1,800	2.9	-21.7
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.4%	2.3%	3.1%		
Total Employment	58,030	57,450	55,890	1.0	3.8
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	58,510	57,450	57,050	1.8	2.6
Unemployment	1,390	1,690	1,750	-17.8	-20.6
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.4%	2.9%	3.1%		
Total Employment	57,120	55,760	55,300	2.4	3.3
<b>JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK</b>					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	50,990	50,440	53,490	1.1	-4.7
<i>Goods-Producing Industries</i>	7,870	7,700	7,270	2.2	8.3
Natural Resources & Mining	10	10	50	0.0	-80.0
Construction	4,450	4,260	3,890	4.5	14.4
Manufacturing	3,410	3,430	3,330	-0.6	2.4
Food Manufacturing	1,100	1,090	1,040	0.9	5.8
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	250	240	240	4.2	4.2
Machinery Manufacturing	150	150	140	0.0	7.1
Other Manufacturing	1,910	1,950	1,910	-2.1	0.0
<i>Service-Providing Industries</i>	43,120	42,740	46,220	0.9	-6.7
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	13,510	13,530	13,470	-0.1	0.3
Wholesale Trade	4,010	4,030	4,180	-0.5	-4.1
Retail Trade	7,670	7,710	7,650	-0.5	0.3
Utilities	60	60	50	0.0	20.0
Transportation	1,770	1,730	1,590	2.3	11.3
Information	1,240	1,240	1,180	0.0	5.1
Financial Activities	2,310	2,220	2,140	4.1	7.9
Professional & Business Services	5,670	5,530	9,480	2.5	-40.2
Educational & Health Services	7,120	7,000	6,790	1.7	4.9
Leisure & Hospitality	4,380	4,360	4,420	0.5	-0.9
Other Services	1,890	1,900	2,040	-0.5	-7.4
Government Education	3,680	3,730	3,470	-1.3	6.1
Government Administration	3,320	3,230	3,230	2.8	2.8

\*Preliminary Estimate

\*\*Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

marked increase in the qualified labor pool. Employers could offer to pay for GED classes or help encourage online courses if a worker or potential worker might be struggling to finish school. There are also alternative high schools in most of the nine counties. Encouraging youth to finish school helps the economy by developing better, more committed employees.

## AREA DEVELOPMENTS

### BONNEVILLE COUNTY

- The expansion and makeover of Idaho Falls' Melaleuca Field, formerly McDermott Field, should be finished by opening day for the Chukars. The \$5.5 million expansion of the baseball field has been in the works for quite a few years, most of those spent raising money. The remodeled ballpark now includes luxury boxes, expanded seating capacity to 3,400, a gift shop, a walkway on top of the seating bowl, two large picnic areas and new bullpens and batting cages plus a ticket office surrounded by beautiful brickwork. The Chukars host the Orem Owlz in the season opener June 22.
- Stardust Sweeper, a baby supply store, just opened on the main floor of the Rogers Building in Idaho Falls. The store's owners are Jackie Brandon and her two daughters, Jennifer Smith and Andrea Puckett. The store carries brands such as Phil and Teds, JJ Cole, Jack and Lily, Baby Star and Babylicious. The store, which also features local vendors, was the result of an inability to find these products in the area.
- Bio Life Plasma Services just broke ground on a 15,000-square-foot facility in Ammon. The energy-efficient building will include a specialized parking surface and reflective roof. Bio Life, a subsidiary of Baxter Healthcare Corp., collects high-quality plasma, nearly 3 million liters a year throughout the United States. Plasma is used in treating many complex medical conditions including immune disorders, cancer and kidney disease.
- A 50,000-square-foot building is the first at the Snake River Landing in Idaho Falls. A 10,000-pound conical cap tops the turret that overlooks

the Snake River. The development touts a "Main Street" theme, allowing for many colors and a wide variety of materials. Although tenants have not been announced, the ground level has over 6,000 square feet for a restaurant and another 12,000 square feet for retail. Ball Ventures, the developers, will use 10,000 square feet upstairs for office space.

- Rigby was at a standstill for a month until Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter appointed a member to the city council. City government stalled when the previous mayor resigned in April. While a council member was appointed mayor within days, two more council members resigned, leaving the council without enough members to conduct business. The governor had to appoint one council member so the panel finally had enough members to fill the remaining two council vacancies on its own. The council is working on hiring a public works director so developers can finish projects.

### COMBINED COUNTIES

- Several counties in east central Idaho have received drought emergency designations. Butte and Custer were the first, followed by Clark, Lemhi and Fremont counties. To qualify, the county commission must approve a resolution seeking the designation, which must then be approved by the Idaho Department of Water Resources and then the governor. The emergency declaration gives irrigators flexibility to temporarily divert water to areas not authorized in their water rights.

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### Youth Employment Information

Every year, millions of teens work in part-time or summer jobs that provide great opportunities for learning important skills. Idaho Commerce & Labor local offices are equipped with materials and helpful consultants to provide assistance to teens looking for jobs. Visit the Web site at [labor.idaho.gov](http://labor.idaho.gov) and click on "LOCAL OFFICE LINKS" to find an office nearby.

Other links that provide youth and businesses with important information regarding employment include : <http://www.youthrules.dol.gov>, the U.S. Department of Labor's Web site about child labor laws and youth employment opportunities, and [www.coolworks.com](http://www.coolworks.com), a Web site with information about jobs around the country at resorts, theme parks and other seasonal opportunities.